



SWETS

SWETS STREAMLINES IT MANAGEMENT WITH SAP NetWeaver®

QUICK FACTS

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Ramon Schrama, Manager IT – External Services, Swets

Company

- Name: Royal Swets & Zeitlinger (Swets)
- Location: Lisse, the Netherlands
- Industry: Media
- Products and services: Subscription services
- Revenue: €755.2 million in 2007
- Employees: 800
- Web site: www.swets.com
- Implementation partner: ITvisors Business Consultants

Challenges and Opportunities

- Improve efficiency of IT management to keep pace with growing demand for electronic data and services
- Increase ROI by gaining the flexibility to respond quickly to fast-changing market dynamics

Objectives

- Unify disparate processes and applications in a single technology platform
- Streamline data management across the enterprise for greater efficiency
- Implement software with the flexibility to be adapted in response to future business goals

SAP® Solutions and Services

- The process integration functionality of the SAP NetWeaver® technology platform
- Earlier implementations: SAP® ERP Financials solution, SAP NetWeaver Business Intelligence component

Implementation Highlights

- Adaptation of essential processes and systems within just 4 months
- Swets IT people trained as consultants on SAP NetWeaver for future developments

Why SAP

- Comprehensive, integrated, cost-effective IT management solution
- Flexible enterprise service-oriented architecture for future evolution in response to business needs
- Ease of integration with existing SAP solutions

Benefits

- Higher ROI due to optimized information management
- Improved efficiency with integration of applications and processes
- Substantially faster time to market for new services and features
- Enhanced support for development of new services in response to market dynamics and business goals

Existing Environment

Nonintegrated point solutions for data management

Third-Party Integration

- Database: DB2
- Hardware: IBM, Dell/Intel
- Operating systems: UNIX, AIX, Linux, Microsoft Windows, z/OS

ROYAL **SWETS** & ZEITLINGER

SAP Customer Success Story
Media



In keeping with rapid changes in the media industry, Royal Swets & Zeitlinger (Swets), a subscription-services company, faced increasing complexity in its global management of magazine and journal subscriptions. Print magazines were transitioning to digital magazines. Subscribers wanted new online services. Swets answered these challenges with SwetsWise, a Web application allowing customers to buy and manage subscriptions and review content online. But behind the scenes, despite a patchwork of components and interfaces, Swets was struggling to help its IT infrastructure keep pace.

In March 2006 the company chose the process integration functionality of the SAP NetWeaver® technology platform to integrate its disparate IT systems and functions. In just four months, the process integration functionality was up and running at Swets – enabling the company to move forward with a unified solution for more effective information management.

Based in Lisse, the Netherlands, Swets is a multinational company with branches in more than 20 countries and annual revenues of €755.2 million in 2007. Around the globe, Swets carries out the complete management and processing of subscriptions to publications both printed and electronic, scholarly and professional. Each year the company handles more than 1.8 million subscriptions for more than 65,000 publishers and more than 60,000 clients worldwide.

From Print Magazines to E-Journals

Because of the number of publishers and subscribers Swets serves, the company was already handling a high

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volume of data to manage processes throughout the life of each subscription. Ramon Schrama, manager of IT for external services for Swets, explains, “Many of our clients are from the academic world. Swets acts as an agent between, on the one hand, around 65,000 publishers of mainly specialist journals – and libraries,

research institutes, and individual subscribers on the other. From the moment a client orders a magazine, we take over almost the entire process, from the distribution to the financial administration.”

But as new digital technology swept through the print-media industry, Swets needed to further expand its services and technological capabilities – and do so at an accelerated pace. Schrama says, “Digital magazines got increasingly popular, at first on CD-ROM, then later in the form of e-journals. This gave a completely new dimension to our business. Clients were demanding new services, like reading and ordering via the Internet.” To meet these demands, the company launched SwetsWise, a Web application that allows clients not only to buy and manage magazine subscriptions, but also to examine content online. Suddenly information that had



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Ramon Schrama, Manager IT – External Services, Swets

been available only internally needed to be available externally – and conditionally, according to what each client chose to purchase. As Schrama says, “SwetsWise allows clients to search only for the information they are entitled to.”

Increasing Complexity Creates a Need for Integration

In supporting these complex business needs, Swets deployed a growing number of applications. Along with SwetsWise, the company was running a mainframe application and a variety

A Streamlined, Flexible Solution for Efficiency and Growth

To address its business challenges, Swets decided to implement a solution that not only would consolidate data and processes but also would provide flexibility to support business goals going forward. Among the short-listed options, SAP NetWeaver stood out as an integrated solution that could streamline data management across the enterprise for greater efficiency. Plus, as Swets knew from its experience with other SAP® solutions, the software is based on a service-oriented architecture

of its thoroughness and competitive price. Besides, Swets was already using the SAP ERP Financials solution and the SAP NetWeaver Business Intelligence component for its financial management and reporting. Choosing the process integration functionality was quite a logical step, in that respect.”

SAP Partner Expertise Provides Fast, Smooth Implementation

As for previous implementations of SAP software at Swets, the company brought in SAP implementation partner ITvisors Business Consultants to ensure a smooth, efficient transition. As a result, the full implementation was successfully completed within four months after Swets chose the process integration functionality of SAP NetWeaver. With a view toward future evolution of its IT management, Swets then decided to have two of its own people trained as consultants on SAP NetWeaver. As Van der Tang explains, “It’s important to have that knowledge at our disposal. We want to be in a position where we can respond to developments very quickly; these information systems are our core business.”

Effective Processes Reduce Time to Market and Increase ROI

By implementing the process integration functionality of SAP NetWeaver, Swets has substantially improved the

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of other software components. In addition, Schrama explains, “In order to connect all platforms and applications, we had written all sorts of interfaces. On top of that we operated a number of hardware and software components that we used for electronic data interchange, or EDI. What’s more, the demand for electronic data was steadily rising. Those developments forced us to search for middleware that could integrate all systems in a well-structured and well-organized way.”

(SOA), which would help the company evolve its data-management environment – with the flexibility to keep up with fast-changing market dynamics.

Rolf van der Tang, software architect at Swets, explains how the company organized the selection of suitable software. “We examined a few products, including the process integration functionality of SAP NetWeaver,” he says. “This functionality produced convincing arguments on a technical level because

efficiency of its IT management with an integrated, cost-effective solution. The company's data management systems and applications are unified by one technology platform, resulting in more streamlined processes. In addition, the integration enables Swets to realize a significantly faster time to market for new services and features. Van der Tang confirms, "Rather than adapting or migrating legacy applications, we now use SAP NetWeaver. It simply means we have much shorter testing cycles than before, and the time to market has become considerably faster."

Because information management is central to Swets' business, the data management and process optimization supported by SAP NetWeaver is key to higher ROI. Van der Tang says, "SAP NetWeaver is the backbone of the information structure our very existence is built on."

Developing Ideas and Digitizing "Pallet Loads" of Invoices

Next steps for Swets include using SAP NetWeaver to streamline and automate key processes such as subscription billing. Schrama explains, "Thanks to SAP NetWeaver, Swets is in a position to develop new ideas. Clients don't want to receive invoices through the post anymore. Some clients have as many as 4,000 subscriptions. That accounts for literally pallet loads of invoices. With the help of SAP NetWeaver, we are now designing an EDI solution to tackle that issue; it will automate the complete billing process."

There are even more developments on the way, as enterprise SOA enables Swets to efficiently evolve its IT landscape to meet new business needs. According to Schrama, "SAP NetWeaver pushes us toward an enterprise SOA. Obviously, that is exactly what we want, for it will simplify our IT management. We have as our slogan, 'Swets simplifies.' It fits in perfectly with SAP NetWeaver."

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